

lines, Thirteenth
takes its title.

17th June 1970

Dear Professor Engle:

Busy as you are, I realize that it is not easy for you to write to all of us international writers. But still, I hope, you have not at least forgotten me. I believe you have a hunch that I am still breathing. And I am.

The last letter I received from you was that of 22nd September, 1970. After that I wrote you three letters and even managed to send you some Christmas cards. I also sent you two short stories. Only recently, I sent you a long letter about a friend of mine, Solomon Deressa. And it seems that either there is something wrong with our postal systems or else you are not in the United States at all, for I receive no letter in return. Or perhaps, could it be that you have ceased to bother about struggling African writers? Or perhaps, have I done anything wrong to lose the only hope I have in the country. The only man I believe who could lighten my existence. Whatever the reason may be, please try to answer me this time.

By the way, I once dreamt about you. You

looked unhappy and broken down. And you were having a fist-fight on the edge of a cliff with that Indian who had tried to bite your hand. And despite your exhausted look, you almost threw him over when you changed your mind and let him live.

I also had another dream about Miss Nieh. I hope her daughters are all right. I am worried about them.

I have finished writing my novel, 'The Thirteenth Sun' in English. It is ready to be sent to you. About two hundred and forty pages. It took me over a year to write it. My readers Ethiopians and foreigners alike tell me that it is better than most African fiction in English. And I believe it is. Who knows, perhaps, it's my only salvation. Only if you could find me a publisher willing enough to sacrifice some advance payment.

I am planning to send it through some friends in the American Embassy here in Addis Ababa. And I hope I will be able to hear from you as soon as you have received my novel.

What have you decided about Solomom? I believe he is a talented candidate.

My warmest regards to Miss Nieh.

Professor Paul Engle
International Writing Program